

Sunday, Serenje (5th March, 2023)



MINING LICENCE COVERING 3 CHIEFDOMS SHOCKS CHIEF KABAMBA

Chief Kabamba of the Lala people of Serenje District, Central Province, is shocked that a named investor has been given a mining license covering three Chiefdoms, without consulting traditional leaders.

The Traditional Leader has since refused to sign a Consent Letter for the investor as provided for under the Chiefs' Authority Act (Chapter 128) of the Laws of Zambia.

He observed that the move was in contravention of the Environmental Impact Assessment - EIA Act which set out the general principles, procedure and methods to enable the prior consideration of environmental impact assessment on certain public or private projects.

This came to light when Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Executive Director Maggie Mwape paid a courtesy call on Chief Kabamba at his palace in Serenje, where the NGO is executing a three-year project, Resilient Initiatives for Sustainable Environment - RISE, supported by Bread for the World - BftW.

Chief Kabamba said he is disappointed that the license covers Kabamba Chiefdom, Chibale Chiefdom and parts of Mkushi Districts and Luano District.

He emphasized that Traditional Leaders were interested in investors to develop the country but that chiefs must be consulted to avoid Human Rights abuses by displacing vulnerable people.

Meanwhile, Central Province Council of Chiefs Chairperson Chief Chibale was surprised that a license was issued without his knowledge.

He said Traditional Leaders under the Central Province Council of Chiefs recently resolved that the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development should be reformed to allow for participation of Chiefs to provide consent before issuing licenses.

Chief Chibale added that Chiefs in Central Province further resolved that all chiefdoms should generate Chiefdom Development Trusts or foundations whose responsibilities should, among others, be the allocation of land and resource mobilization in the Chiefdoms.

He said the Chiefs resolved that all Chiefdoms shall identify and compile a list of investors in mining, timber trading and any other economic activities.

The Traditional Leader urged Government to always engage Chiefs in the development agenda.

And Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Board Member Boniface Mumba said his organization appreciated the role Chiefs play in the environmental sustainability.

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